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Sacred and Space in Post-Secular Pilgrimage: The Camino de Santiago and Relational Model of the Sacred

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The aim of this paper is to shed light on the changes in perceiving the sacred which have appeared in the history of pilgrimage. These are linked with different theological approaches to space and subsequent periods of desecralisation, secularisation and re-sacralization. Relying on a modern theology of pilgrimage and research into the philosophy of religion by M. Eliade the paper offers a new interpretation of the message of the Camino de Santiago which overcomes previous reductionisms based on seeing the sacred solely in the destination (the shrine). The relationship with the Camino and the content of pilgrim blessings indicate the role of experiencing order, beauty and these virtues which shape the relational order (corresponding with the virtue of *religio*). The effort of pilgrims is linked to this, however, it is no longer described in terms of 'sacrifice' although it is related to the same content which is perceived in a new post-secular cultural context.

Key Words: surrogate pilgrimage, sacred space, medieval pilgrimage, pilgrim blessing, philosophy of pilgrimage, sacraments.

Introduction

For many centuries, the process of removing the sacred from everyday life has taken place, despite the significant breakthrough introduced by the Christian message in the view of what is sacred and its emphasis on non-exclusiveness. It seems that this approach has resulted from stereotypes functioning in the Roman culture. In this way, as E. Durand (2018) has observed, the religiosity of the 'compromise' was built,^[1] which, emphasising the radical otherness of God, placed Him on the same level, opposing it dialectically and being some form of compromise of the ancient immanent world and God's transcendence. Undoubtedly, this was a challenge for Christian theology of the first centuries when it was forced to struggle with the heresies of antiquity. The question arises whether humans cease to be religious beings outside the acts of worship, such as prayer and Mass and whether Christianity and the mystery of Incarnation do not change the perception of the meaning of sacredness as inclusion and not disconnection (the opposition of pure-unclean in the Hebrew mentality). In the Christian paradigm, religious life is not fragmented into 'holy' and 'unholy' elements, but it is permeated with the pursuit of sanctification, namely the acceptance of grace, which refers the whole human life to God. This model, let us call it a relational *sacrum*, finds its justification in Paul's recognition of Christ as the head of the Church. The concept of *Christus totus* (the total Christ) developed later by St. Augustine, does not imply

dissolving the world in God but including the Trinitarian communion, without disturbing the ontological autonomy of the world. The task of Christian theology is to seal the system, integrate it so that there are no 'gaps', but a constant reference of everything to God (Gargiulo, 2018:285-314; Perszon, 2013:151-182).

Sacral vision of the world and post-secular worldview. From the axiological decompression to the replacement of the sacred?

In fact, such was the ancient expression of sacredness, as Mircea Eliade (1959) argued in his works.^[2] In an ancient version, Eliade viewed humans as integrated beings in a constant presence of the deity and sacredness as determined by the fullness of being, whereas the profane was defined by what was irrelevant, variable and superficial (Stagi, 2015: 62).

1. The author draws attention to the images of transcendence and the influence of unambiguous thinking about being which underlines the difficulties of reflection on the transcendental immanence of God.
2. 'The nature and meaning of sacred spaces was considered by Mircea Eliade over fifty years ago in his book *The sacred and the profane: the Nature of Religion* (1959), when he constructed his paradigm based on Durkheim's work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London, 1915). Both scholars based their analysis on the ancient Roman distinction between *sacer* and *profanes* using words, which originally had a spacial meaning.'

The sacred is not something that can be seen with eyes, like one of many objects on the horizon (there is no sacral map, though one sometimes hears such phrases as the sacred map of Europe!), but it is revealed in objects seen by the power of the sacred itself. *Essere* and *sacrum* identify themselves: the distance from the sacred gives larval existence. It is not a question of different and relative opinion, but an ontological modality which views the universe as holy (Bogdanovic, 2018). In fact, this is close to the biblical *nabal*, a foolish man who does not see his orientation towards the truth (he does not see the obvious things). In this context, it is difficult not to notice a significant change: nowadays only what belongs to the profane is believed to be true (Rivas García, 2017:51-61).

Marked by tendencies of reductive materialism (i.e. trends towards neuroscience) which interpret phenomena by reducing them down to the most basic components, the richness of the world is lost and Ockham's razor is applied selectively; modern times display some aversion to 'deep' explanations (Echarte, 2007:467). The old ideas of *theo-pharmakos* return, based on a naturalistic view of religion, to recreate sentimental religiosity with the help of 'dances' or ecstasy and thus contact with the sacred is built through the external 'something', which has almost magical power to connect us with divinity (Granados, 2018:101-126). As Benedict XVI has observed, this proposal leads to a certain pseudo-religiosity, in which the desire for infinity is satisfied by mitigating the metaphysical 'horror', which for some may be associated with presence in the reality where the path to God is realised with a certain degree of uncertainty, its price being freedom. In this context, the road to the sacred in contemporary culture is a race in search of something exceptional or an escape, which seems to be visible in some narratives about the Camino de Santiago as a form of post-secular pilgrimage.

I will argue that the Camino leads to the experience of 'order' and harmony and inclines to find comprehensive explanations. The discovery of beauty on the Camino is not a mere aesthetic experience, but the discovery of values and courage to approach the reality opening the way to the Creator and restoring a very Christian understanding of the sacred, which has been blurred over the centuries. This does not mean that space is ignored and the interiorization of experiences becomes a focus, but serves as a future forum for sacredness, as the experience of space is important for the Christian vision of the sacred (which has been revealed in the course of dialogue with the *Devotio Moderna*). This is inscribed in the atmosphere

of our time. Today, the social sciences speak directly of a 'spacial turn', and the emotional element also configures it (Cristoforetti *et al.*, 2011:225-232). Space understood in this way becomes a feature of personal life, which may point to 'here' and 'now'. This does not signify, however, forms of idolatry of space, frequently there are very subtle ones, but it is an indication of the need for spiritual experience (Sewell, 2018:114-126).

In medieval practice 'substitute pilgrimage' existed; a situation when people who could not go to the shrine, but made a pilgrimage, for example, through a maze in a cathedral. Today, through new forms (setting routes around places of residence and regional Camino routes), this experience appears in various forms of Catholic pilgrimage. Braush (2016) has noted that this illustrates the need for 'spaceability' in a spiritual experience, albeit in a reduced form.

Space and the sacred; post-secular meanders

Marc Augé defines the current epoch as a period of 'hyper-modernism', which is characterised by 'excess', - in addition to the excess of time and ego we also see the excess of space. He refers to a specific shortening of space, which, thanks to technology has become available, although it is distant from everyday life. As Trepczyński (2013:176) remarks, Augé's suggestion aims to anchor the thinking of a person in 'non-places', i.e. 'counter-places' of traditional anthropology, characterised by stability, clarity or diversity. New places are airport terminals, hotel rooms, petrol stations which are identical and offer anonymity and relief. The person experiences paradoxes, because it is possible to get anywhere you want and visit every part of the globe, and yet one experiences the contraction of the world. Apart from 'non-places', traditional places also offer a refuge. People live in a tension between fatigue and running away from it, because they can no longer look at the world differently, but through the filter of their own 'self'.

As Nilsson (2016) has observed, the post-secular approach to place is characterised not so much by Euclidean space and what we think about based on Leibniz's philosophy and Einstein's discoveries — space being considered in terms of relations, but by a dynamic approach. This leads us to discover two aspects of 'being in place': multidimensionality and contextuality, and thus to appreciate not only the geographical conditions of the terrain (shape, height), but the definition of 'place' which includes its socio-cultural impact, the certain energy it brings to human

life (Chemin, 2011). It is not about a 'piece of land' but the power of shaping. As Nilsson emphasises, modernity is characterised by a certain abstraction from space (something started within the *Devotio Moderna*), a certain attempt to secularise space which deprived it of its uniqueness in relation to others. It was a process of 'homogenizing' space, and thus reducing everything to 'one', removing the specificity. De-secularisation, as Berger describes it, leads to the rediscovery of 'places full of meaning' (meaningful places), and even their re-sacralisation. In this cultural climate, it cannot be surprising that Tuan (1977:179) determines religious sites (shrines) as 'organized worlds of meaning.' If we wish to apply this description, it is necessary to acknowledge that pilgrims have changed and they may perceive the world as a 'holy bazaar' or a bazaar with the holies (they have finally admitted that such a place exists!), however, they still feel like consumers. They can be characterised by distance to the ritual, although they have a great passion to see, take photos and show them. Nevertheless, they are merely spectators.

Today, when we reflect on the Christian approach to space, we perceive it not as imprisonment, but as the introduction of persons into relationships. The emphasis in the theology of pilgrimage on the value of space, the physical presence in the place of apparitions, for example, is the recovery of relationship, not a magical entry into the 'tunnel of change.' The work of grace is always incarnational, embodied in forms, focused on recovering the fullness of sonship by man.

Can we see the sacred? A theological sense of 'sacredness' – Thomistic inspirations

With such an array of human references to space – necessarily limited to a few examples, the question arises how to connect God's grace and space. Is grace only an internal experience, abstracted from life, or is it related to a specific place and time? It seems that a reference to a certain vision of the place (*locum*), and thus the significance of the outside world proposed by scholasticism, the thought of Aquinas in particular, may be helpful in understanding the current state (Rowland, 2009). Thomistic approach to the world is reflected in the structure of *The Summa Theologiae*, which develops in the rhythm of ever deeper discovery of the presence, starting from God, from creation, through good ethical action, in which grace is incorporated, to Christ, who is the Incarnate Word, all the fullness of the Deity in bodily form, (see Col 2:9).^[3] The principle of St. Thomas' thought is inherited from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's rule that

omne agens agit sibi simile, and thus, there is a way to find the sacred by 'similarities', especially in relation to the act of existence. God is not a substitute for things, He is not their 'essence' but the cause. For St. Thomas Aquinas there are no spiritual things 'on their own', pneumatic substances, but always mediated, just like current and conductors. In philosophy, naturalism forces us to develop a certain spirituality, which is sensitive to signs, to everyday life; interpreting the Bible and its relation to science on many levels (Novo, Pereda, Sanchez-Cañizares, 2018). Daelemans (2015) has noted that it finds its expression in Christian architecture, in which the perception of space is exceeded as pure and exclusive functionality. Space does not speak *per se*, but only through people who occupy it. Therefore, the photograph of a place is not sufficient, you have to include people in it so that the place acquires its real character. In this context, it is not astonishing that the understanding of 'religiosity' principally relies on a relational context, because *devotio* is based on organizing the world's affairs in relation to God.

Viewing God as the first cause, and not as a 'cause among causes', makes us search for depth under the surface of nature (Roszak, 2017:133-153). But His difference from the world is not due to the fact that He is far away but close to the world. From this it follows that being close to the world, its matters and problems (which in traditional religious language is defined as 'sanctification'), namely, the intensification of this relationship to the world is, at the same time, coming close to God Himself. As Aquinas observes, nature does not 'contain' God, but refers to Him as the effect refers to the cause.^[4]

Today, it is necessary to abandon the infantile approach to experiencing religion and to work out a new pattern of relations between God, the world (nature) and humanity (Haught, 2003:134). Nature becomes the sacrament of divinity and we can still admire it and see God. Therefore, ultimately, one can speak of a certain toil, which appears, in the experience of pilgrimage, which testifies to the aforementioned

3. In the Commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, Thomas emphasizes that 'God is not the first object known by us' (*In De Trinit.*, q.1, a.3c). God is not the One whom man knows first but the last One. The way to know Him leads to *ex aliis*, as Thomas observes. The encounter with God is a way for man; it is possible to get lost, stop, get to the higher level, like in a game.

4. Thomas Aquinas, *In Gal.*, cap. IV, lect. 1: 'iste ordo est congruus naturae humanae, ut a sensibilibus ad intellectualia perducantur.'

path. Fatigue reveals the transcendental dimension of life, to which an individual does not arrive in a purely intuitive way. Pilgrimage is created, relying on the 'theology of sweat on your face'.

The significance of the refugium on the Camino

In the tradition of the Camino, one distinguishes between a 'hostel' and a modest place of accommodation, in which there are only basic facilities. This is the difference between the *albergue* and *refugio*, which is a place of protection against difficulties, a shelter against the storm. However, it is not so much an escape (some form of escapism), but strengthening. Referring this reflection to the sacred, it means that the ideal is not to create an enclave, which is labelled as 'Christian life', excluded from everyday life, but the permeating of grace through all elements of human life, its true flourishing, which is associated with making choices and some struggle. Thus, the *refugium* is a 'salvation' and a bridgehead which convinces us about the right choice. At the same time, it cannot be 'deified' again, as it is sacramentality, not the idolatry of place that belongs to Christianity, thus the process of binding-sending. God could have created other realities as the signs of His grace, but he chose water and oil because of the *convenientia*.

The spirituality of the Camino: the logic of sacrifice

In many accounts of the journey there is an experience of humility, which is understood not as humiliation but as the service of the truth. For a Thomistic approach, humility is a 'meta-virtue' which does not allow you to focus on yourself. Humility is the virtue of realism, not pretending to be someone else (as this is the domain of 'pride'). The Camino helps one to discover the true face, and thus contributes to understand what humility is. It becomes something creative because it encourages people to allow more oxygen to be delivered to the culture, in which they suffocate.

Does tiredness bear a theological meaning or is it only anthropologically conditioned?

The theme of toil can be considered from both a philosophical and theological perspective. On the one hand, the world is still 'unfinished', and so we are also on the way, on a pilgrimage to our destination. We are opening up to the future, to hope, that is, to the dynamics of growth.

Traditionally in theology, it is assumed that the initial harmony of human kind has been disrupted by original sin, which distorted the sense of previous experience, it can be said that it falsified it. There are sweat and toil associated with the difficulty of getting food (see Gen 3:19). At the same time, God's goodness has to be remembered and does not end with the fall of the first parents, but changes and still reaches the person, although in a different way, thus the effort is transformed into grace. It becomes a chance to discover what is valuable, because it requires struggle to achieve it. According to Aquinas, this is the sense of fatigue – *fatigatio* and it becomes the price to acquire good disposition (*habitus*). Humans acquire virtues through effort in which they also experience the support of grace. In his anthropology Thomas does not accept even a subtle version of angelism, but points to realism, which always views the beginnings of intellectual knowledge in the first sensory cognition (Mróz, 2018:115-128). That is why, Thomas Aquinas speaks about the special form of fatigue, which is inscribed into the Christian concept of pilgrimage, which he called 'the fatigue of the soul.'^[5] It appears when people start their work of practical or speculative reasoning, but, above all, when they begin contemplation, thanks to which they rise above the experience of sensory things. This breaking out of everyday life and old lifestyle, to use the contemporary phenomenological language instead of Thomas Aquinas' terminology is present in travel reports and costs some fatigue, which is, however, beneficial.

In these accounts of pilgrims, there is often a category of 'sacrifice', which explains the sense of effort to reach Santiago, the consent for uncomfortable conditions of pilgrimage and accommodation and the unpredictability of subsequent stages. It is clear that in this way the theology of pilgrimage regains the non-cultic significance of the sacrifice, or rather its essence as the 'recognition of God' when we devote to Him what is most important in life. Time and singing are a form of sacrifice because they include the recognition of God as the source of our life (Platovnjak, 2018). On the Camino there are many symptoms of this experience of sacrifice, which is expressed even by a T-shirt with a text: 'no pain, no glory'. In the classic

5. S. Th., II-II, q. 168 a. 2 c: 'Sunt autem bona sensibilia connaturalia homini. Et ideo, quando anima supra sensibilia elevatur operibus rationis intenta, nascitur exinde quaedam fatigatio animalis, sive homo intendat operibus rationis practicae, sive speculativae. Magis tamen si operibus contemplationis intendat, quia per hoc magis a sensibilibus elevatur, quamvis forte in aliquibus operibus exterioribus rationis practicae maior labor corporis consistat.'

sense, sacrifice is the destruction of something, death and rebirth. The biblical idea of sacrifice signifies the death of something in a human being so that something new may be born (the sacrifice of Abraham, in which his fatherhood dies). If this theological understanding is applied to pilgrimage, it can be observed that perhaps the key to grasp its sacrificial character is that the 'pangs of pain' of the new person's rebirth are experienced: the costs of transition are perceptible and troublesome, because they demand to leave the old things behind. In the modern cultural context this feature of sacrifice may be exemplified by not using a smart phone and thus, slowing down the pace of everyday life, which allows us to better notice the shapes and nature of things around us (Cara, 2018).

Pilgrimage as a sacrament. Transgressing reductionism

The sacramental world does not destroy or deny the material nature of things, but discovers their significance and direction, their non-finality (Kupczak, 2018). Therefore, from the Christian perspective, the idea of sacramentality is a space shaped by or related to Christ, which explains the meaning of the blessings of everyday things and situations: from home to a long journey. It expresses the expansion and the drawing of the world to Christ, as it has been emphasised by Johannes Pinski. Although in traditional religious language 'consecration' has been understood predominantly as 'exclusion', one must see something more in it, namely giving a reference, opening a 'path' for a person, the notion which is so aptly expressed by one of the Psalms: 'You show me the path of life' (Ps 16:11). This also illustrates the ideological connection of pilgrimage with the liturgical act of procession (Holkeskamp, 2015). All this originates from contemplation of the mystery of Christ and the matter of the sacraments which become the carriers of the life of grace. There is no 'before' or 'behind' the world, but a dimension of depth, shaping the order of the world through the sacred (Szulakiewicz, 2018). There is some sacramentality of space which becomes the key to understand the material nature of the world, and is revealed in the experience of a pilgrimage to sanctuaries: grace becomes concrete. In this way, the pilgrim experiences the sacred (Woolgar, 2018).

Today, a typically Christian 'sacramental' approach to the world, as the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann (1972) put it, has been questioned. Therefore, for philosophical thought, the very existence of God is not such an obstacle (the existence of some form of Absolute seems to be accepted by the majority

of the most important philosophical trends), as it is a form of His relationship with the world. Nowadays, the relationship to creation has been severed: creation becomes mute and hence the division into the sacred and the profane. It is difficult to indicate in the structure of the sacrament what the sacred is, and what the profane is. Does it refer to the water in the sacrament of baptism? The sacramentality of the world is an indication that it communicates something to us.

It seems that debates on purely dogmatic issues, in the field of sacramentology in particular, may seem insignificant, however, they are valuable, for example to understand pilgrimage in Catholic reflection. Two types of mentality come into dispute here. On the one hand, the so-called theology of the 'pact' developed in the medieval, Franciscan sacramental theology, where the material element, at most, serves the disposition of the recipient, and God 'agrees' with people that when such and such conditions arise, He will directly grant His grace. On the other hand, St. Thomas Aquinas opposes this approach, as according to him, it reduces the sacraments to ordinary signs or a 'pretext' for grace. In addition, such thinking conceals a dangerous assumption that the spiritual cannot come through something which is material, and thus grace must come on the principle of creation *ex nihilo* (Tück, 2014). Relying on this assumption, Thomistic theology resembles the Aristotelian approach and borrows from it the notion of the principal and instrumental cause: the sacraments are the instrumental cause of grace, and thus what they reflect from God's life is not straightforward, but demands a more profound approach. Just as the table is not similar to the tool (saw) that was used to build it, but rather to the idea of the table in the mind of the carpenter.

This distinction between two kinds of reasons is helpful in our reflection on the Camino de Santiago as it shows how God works in the experience of the Camino and why one cannot underestimate the hardships of pilgrimage, which is *causa instrumentalis*.^[6] This means that the world *per se* is not sacred, but it can become such, as Congar notes, when it is filled with signs which lead to grace, and when it has a relational reference and does not focus on the signs themselves, but on what they signify (Arnold, 2018). From the theological point of view, it sheds a new light

6. The image of the working of sacraments presented by Hugh of St. Victor is very inspiring. He compares the sacraments to the medicine bottle, but it is the medicine, not the container, that cures illness. Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, I, 9, 4.

on the understanding of religious tourism, which differs from the pilgrimage due to its emphasis on the 'relation' which effort plays in the undertaken expedition.

Practical implications: the significance of pilgrim blessing for a post-secular traveller

In the light of the increased pilgrimage movement, contemporary literature on the phenomenon of pilgrimage frequently highlights the ambiguous nature of the experience of the Camino, which cannot be easily reduced to support post-secular theses, or the return of interest in religion as such (Lopez, 2014). Meanwhile, the diagnosis is not self-evident, but demands further research which takes into account the theological dimension, frequently absent from sociological and historical studies (Oviedo, Courcier, Farias, 2014). However, the view of Reader (2007) that pilgrimage has freed itself from the religious forms of institutional religions even if the pilgrim participates and visits places associated with religious cult seems to be unfounded and incoherent.^[7] These changes in post-secular religiosity, associated with individualism or selfism, are not characterised by rejection, but a selective approach to the activity of institutional religious forms (Perszon, 2018).

The key to understanding the way of experiencing the Camino by post-secular wanderers seems to be their desire, regardless of the level of their faith, to participate in the rite of a pilgrim blessing. From a historical perspective, it was a rite of farewell, carried out as part of the liturgy, which separated the pilgrims temporarily from the community, showed their new tasks and defined the spiritual framework of their efforts. It is not about a casual leaving home and entering a group of travellers, but it is the process of determining the dimensions of the pilgrimage. Particularly elaborate blessing rites occurred in the Spanish liturgy, where emphasis was placed on God's protection of the wanderer, the types of dangers they could encounter (from the carnal to spiritual), and uncertainty. Pilgrims were to be aware that God accompanied them in this journey, through angels, His chosen companions, and guides them to their destination. The readings from the Scriptures made it clear that the aim of this journey was to be enriched, but above all, to intensify the good. It must be remembered that blessing is not an expression of wishful thinking in Christianity, but as Aquinas reminds us, through blessing, God performs good in people.^[8] Therefore, to bless the pilgrims is to indicate that something good begins in them, something that

they cannot overlook and ignore but have to develop creatively. The aim is not to ignore difficulties, but to be convinced that they carry the pilgrims to their destination like waves carry the boat. It is an attitude of resilience which reveals itself with all its power in the pilgrimage.

In the modern rite of pilgrim blessing, which is practiced at many stages of the Camino: at the beginning, during the journey, but also at the end, it is all about opening up to the post-secular pilgrims the world of meanings and relationships in which they enter. This is a network of references in which their effort is inscribed – the 'con-text', thanks to which 'text' can be fully understood. Participation in this rite transforms the perception of experience, introduces as input the necessary data to decipher events. They will appear the same to the observer, but they will not be the same anymore. Religious and non-religious experiences are not materially different for the observer, using metaphysical categories, but they differ formally. The Eucharistic bread for Christians does not cease to taste like bread after consecration, although it is no longer bread.

To bless denotes to endow with meaning, not to consecrate in an elitist or esoteric sense, but to convince that you follow the path of good and you should rely on contemplation which will open your eyes to what is around you. Here asceticism does not consist in removing you from the world, but in allowing you to see something more.

Contemporary blessings are varied, depending on the place on the Camino. Apart from the traditional prayer in Spanish, the most widespread on the Way of St. James is, *O Dios que sacaste a tu siervo*. This prayer includes other forms of blessing, accompanied by a series of explanatory gestures: coming to the altar (separating a group of pilgrims from the faithful

7. In this respect, the view that visiting religious places is a departure from religiosity suggested by I. Reader seems unconvincing, although we may speak of new mutations of religiosity. In addition, the author assumes that the search for meaning by individuals is diametrically opposed to religious motivation, which reveals that this kind of perspective is based on a dubious methodology of exclusion, while religious thinking is inclusive. Perhaps the 'forms' of pilgrimage are changing and resemble the 'new wineskins', to which you have to pour new wine. This process can be observed, for example, on the Camino.

8. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Hebr.*, cap. VI, lect. 2: 'Ista autem benedictio nihil aliud est, quam factio bonitatis in nobis'.

present at the liturgy), extending hand, sprinkling with holy water, kissing relics, making the sign of the cross on the forehead, laying-on of hands. Each of these blessings builds a different relationship of pilgrims with their aim: at the beginning of the Way, during the pilgrimage and the final blessing in the Cathedral in Santiago, which the pilgrims have reached *ad limina Iacobi*. At the same time, according to the medieval theology and liturgy in which the rites of the pilgrim blessings developed, it was about the *multiplicatio*, that is, granting power for further development, bearing fruit of what had been initiated during the pilgrimage.^[9]

Conclusion

The difficulties in the interpretation of the phenomenon of pilgrimage are born at the point where one is looking for the sacredness or religiosity of ‘something’ excluded from the world. Thus the scholastic approach is abandoned, with its *religio* as a bond or relationship bearing a social dimension and the conviction that supernaturality is experienced through the material and the ordinary. The search for the sacred in materiality is always burdened with the risk of reduction and cursory assessment, which can be seen in the description of the pilgrimage, in which sacredness is identified with the external religious act, thus revealing the approach to the sacred as ‘something’ existing in the world.

It seems that for the emerging post-secular religiosity, the scholastic perception of the sacred in the relational key is definitely more attractive, and the idea of interpreting connections with the world, interpreting everything in relation to God is an urgent need to see the world in the sacred manner, i.e. *sub ratione Dei*. The point is not to ‘escape’ from the world but to experience it deeper, abandoning superficial life and turning to the profound understanding of it. In this sense, the sacredness includes everything that manifests God’s action in history, becoming His epiphany, and pilgrimage makes sense only when it leads to noticing these signs.

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9. The idea of St. Gregory the Great collected, among others, by Thomas Aquinas *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 18 q. 1 a. 2 s.c. 1. quia, ut dicit Gregorius, *benedictio Dei dicitur bonorum ejus collatio et eorumdem multiplicatio*. Cum ergo Deus legatur Gen. 1 sua opera benedixisse, videtur quod eis dederit virtutes quibus fieret eorum multiplicatio

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